

the young lady to defer marriage until he should have spent several years abroad. This diplomatic appointment would enable him to realize his dream in an almost ideal way. Tie debated long and anxiously whether he should go or not. After three days of waiting, the messenger who brought word of his appointment returned to Congress with this answer: "It would arsru great insensibility in me could I receive with indifference

so confidential an appointment from your body. My thanks are a poor return for the partiality they have been pleased to entertain for me. No cares for my own person nor yet for my private affairs would have induced one moment's hesitation to accept the charge. But circumstances very peculiar to the situation of my family, such as neither permit me to leave or to carry it, compel me to ask leave to decline a service so honorable, and at the same time, so< important to the American cause."

Jefferson took his seat in the first republican House of Delegates that met in Virginia on the first day of the session, and entered at once upon a labor of reform that was to prove the greatest work of his life, and that revolutionized the public and private law of the State. The code of Virginia, when he and Wythe and Madison took hold of it to> make, it reasonable and human and just, was a strange pot-pourri of tyranny, cruelty and bigotry. Its penal code, like that of the mother country before the days of Bentham, was as unscientific as it was severe. At every county seat there was a pillory, a whipping-post, and stocks. A general law commanded the erection of these instruments of torture in the yards of all court-

houses. The ducking-stool for babbling women could be added if such was the local option. The laws in force relating to religion were as intolerant as the age in which they had been passed—the age of the wrongly named "Toleration Act." To call in question the Trinity or to be a deist was punishable with imprisonment without bail. To be a Catholic debarred a man of the right to teach, to own a horse or a gun, or to give testimony in a court of law. A Protestant minister not of the Anglican faith could be legally drummed out of the country. The right of voting